

English Verbs: Past Simple

We use the “Past Simple” to refer to an event which is **finished**. We always need to use a “**time reference**” (ex. “yesterday”, “last week”, “when I was young”, “three weeks ago”, etc.). There is only **one** form for each verb (except the verb “to be”, which has two forms). There are **regular** and **irregular** verbs, originating from different languages.

1. Regular Verbs (add “-ed”, “-d”, “-ied” or “-ked”)

Infinitive	Past Simple
to look	looked
to form	formed
to walk	walked
to kiss	kissed
to play	played
to show	showed

Infinitive	Past Simple
to live	lived
to date	dated
to execute	executed
to die	died
to accumulate	accumulated
to owe	owed

Infinitive	Past Simple (CVC rule)
to stop	stopped
to commit	committed
to travel	travelled
to beg	begged
to bat	batted

Infinitive	Past Simple (exception: vowel before ‘y’)
to try	tried
to marry	married
to bury	buried
to clarify	clarified
to deny	denied

Infinitive	Past Simple
to frolic	frolicked
to mimic	mimicked
to panic	panicked
to traffic	trafficked

2. Irregular Verbs (change the vowel, change the end or change nothing)

Change the vowel:

1. sleep → slept, keep → kept, weep → wept, sweep → swept
2. blow → blew, grow → grew, know → knew, throw → threw
3. break → broke, speak → spoke
4. drink → drank, ring → rang, sing → sang, sit → sat, swim → swam
5. bear → bore, swear → swore, wear → wore
6. stand → stood, understand → understood

Change the end:

1. bring → brought
2. build → built
3. catch → caught
4. leave → left
5. make → made
6. think → thought
7. pay → paid
8. buy → bought

Change nothing:

1. cost → cost
2. cut → cut
3. hit → hit
4. let → let
5. put → put

Exercises:

<https://www.really-learn-english.com/simple-past-exercises.html>

<https://www.myenglishpages.com/grammar-exercise-simple-past/>

Some common irregular verbs:

Infinitive	Past Simple	Infinitive	Past Simple
be	was, were	know	knew
bear	bore	leave	left
become	became	lend	lent
begin	began	let	let
bite	bit	lose	lost
blow	blew	make	made
break	broke	mean	meant
bring	brought	meet	met
build	built	pay	paid
buy	bought	put	put
catch	caught	read	read (<i>PN: 'red'</i>)
choose	chose	ride	rode
come	came	ring	rang
cost	cost	run	ran
cut	cut	say	said
do	did	see	saw
draw	drew	sell	sold
drive	drove	send	sent
drink	drank	shut	shut
eat	ate	sing	sang
fall	fell	sit	sat
feed	fed	sleep	slept
feel	felt	speak	spoke
fight	fought	spend	spent
find	found	stand	stood
fly	flew	steal	stole
forget	forgot	swear	swore
forgive	forgave	sweep	swept
freeze	froze	swim	swam
get (up)	got (up)	take	took
give	gave	teach	taught
go	went	tell	told
grow	grew	think	thought
have	had	throw	threw
hear	heard	understand	understood
hide	hid	wake (up)	woke (up)
hit	hit	wear	wore
hold	held	weep	wept
hurt	hurt	win	won
keep	kept	write	wrote

Negative sentences

To make a negative sentence, we use “**didn’t**” and the **infinitive** form:

- He **didn’t go** to the cinema yesterday.
- I **didn’t see** you last week.
- They **didn’t like** the pizza last night.

One exception - the verb “**to be**”:

- He **wasn’t** sick last week.
- They **weren’t** here last night.
- I **wasn’t** at home on Sunday.

Questions

To make a question, we use “**did**” and the **infinitive** form:

Yes/No questions:

- **Did** you **go** to the cinema yesterday?
- **Did** Mary **see** Peter last week?
- **Did** they **like** the pizza last night?

One exception - the verb “**to be**”:

- **Were** you sick yesterday?
- **Was** he stressed last Monday?

W/H questions:

- Where **did** you **go** yesterday?
- Why **did** you **say** that?
- Who **did** you **see** on Sunday?
- When **did** you **see** Peter?
- How **did** you **go** to work last night?

One exception - the verb “**to be**”:

- Why **were** you at home yesterday?
- When **was** Peter born?
- Where **were** you last night?

Video suggestion:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BI0kzBJo9_E (17 mins)